



Maryland Court Interpreter Protocol and Guidelines

Acceptance of an interpretation assignment in the Maryland courts is a serious commitment. Interpreters, as officers of the court, are required to adhere to the Maryland Code of Conduct for Court Interpreters to ensure Limited English Proficiency individuals have equal access to justice and fully participate in the proceedings.

- Please arrive for your assignment at least 15 minutes early to allow sufficient time for parking and passing through security at the courthouse.
- Make sure to sign in with the interpreter coordinator **before** proceeding to the courtroom. **Once in the courtroom, please immediately advise the courtroom clerk of your presence and provide case information.**
- The court is a formal environment and you should maintain an appropriate level of formality with court personnel, attorneys, etc. **Always dress professionally. Business attire is required.** Do not use heavy perfume, cologne, make-up, or excessive jewelry.
- Be formal when addressing parties in court (i.e. 'Your Honor', 'Counselor', 'Mr./Mrs.', 'Doctor', 'Professor').
- Bring a notepad and a pen to the court to take notes while interpreting. All interpreters should bring a legal glossary and a bilingual dictionary with them to their assignments.
- The interpretation must be conducted in the first person. Speak in the voice of the person you are interpreting for; never use 'she said or he said'.
- Always refer to yourself in the third person, as 'the interpreter.' This is important for accurate transcriptions of the hearing. For example, if you need the speaker to repeat the sentence, you should address the Court in the following manner: **"The interpreter requests the last statement to be repeated"**.
- Should you come across an unfamiliar word, request the Court's permission to look it up in the dictionary: **"The interpreter requests the Court's indulgence to look up a word in the dictionary"**.
- Interpret all English language proceedings simultaneously using wireless equipment provided by the court coordinator. The Consecutive mode of interpreting should be used only during direct testimony and without the equipment.
- When interpreting, make sure to provide an accurate interpretation in a loud and clear voice without embellishments, omissions, or editing, while maintaining the tone and register of the speaker.
- Inform the Court immediately if you make an error in interpretation in the following manner: **"The interpreter would like to make a correction"**.
- Inform the Court immediately if there is any real or perceived conflict of interest (i.e. you are acquainted with or related to parties in the case or if you have an interest in the outcome of the case) in the following manner: **"Your Honor, may the interpreter approach"**.
- Under no circumstances should you converse with either the attorneys or the party you are interpreting for. This appearance of impropriety is inappropriate and can be grounds for dismissal.

